

APPLICATION TO PLACE ON THE APPROPRIATE OFFICIAL LIST
THE NAMES GIVEN BY G. FISCHER 1814 TO THE CRICETID
RODENTS DESCRIBED BY FELIX DE AZARA IN THE FRENCH
TRANSLATION OF "ESSAIS SUR L'HISTOIRE NATURELLE DES
QUADRUPÈDES DU PARAGUAY," 1801. Z.N.(S.) 1774

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In the year 1801 Felix de Azara described in the "Essais ..." 6 mice belonging to the Cricetidae. His descriptions are very accurate and quite outstanding for the epoch. It is regrettable that Azara did not use linnean nomenclature but applied vernacular names to the mice he described.

2. The first person to give linnean names to Azara's cricetids was Gotthelf Fischer (1814). In his "Zoognosia..." G. Fischer used the following names accompanied by a clear reference to Azara's descriptions: page 71

<i>M[us] rufus</i>	Rat Roux of Azara	genus <i>Oxymycterus</i>
<i>Mus tarso nigro</i>	Rat à Tarse Noir	„ <i>Oryzomys</i>
<i>Mus laucha et lauchita</i>	Laucha et Lauchita	„ <i>Calomys</i>
<i>M[us] auritus</i>	Rat Oreillard	„ <i>Reithrodon</i>
<i>M[us] angouya</i>	Rat Angouya	„ <i>Oryzomys</i>
<i>M[us] megacephalus</i>	Rat à Grosse Tête	„ <i>Oryzomys</i>

3. The second naturalist who named Azara's cricetids was Karl Illiger (1815). There is little doubt that Illiger's names referred to Azara's descriptions but the author did not make a clear statement thereon and his names must be considered "nomina nuda". The following are the names given by Illiger: page 108

Mus capito
Mus buccinatus
Mus physodes
Mus rutilans
Mus nigripes
Mus laucha

4. In 1818 Olfers, reviewing the work of Illiger above mentioned, listed the names proposed by the last author and accompanied them by a clear reference to Azara's descriptions. In this way the names became available. The following are Olfers names:

<i>M[us] capito</i>	Rat à Grosse Tête
<i>M[us] buccinatus</i>	Rat Angouya
<i>M[us] physodes</i>	Rat Oreillard
<i>M[us] rutilans</i>	Rat Roux
<i>M[us] nigripes</i>	Rat à Tarse Noir
<i>M[us] laucha</i>	Laucha et Lauchita

5. The third naturalist who named Azara's cricetids was Desmarest (1819). He accompanied the new names with a description transcribed from

Azara and a clear reference to Azara's work. The following are Desmarest's names: pages 62-65

<i>Mus rufus</i>	Rat Roux
<i>Mus nigripes</i>	Rat à Tarse Noir
<i>Mus laucha</i>	Rat Laucha et Lauchita
<i>Mus auritus</i>	Rat Oreillard
<i>Mus angouya</i>	Rat Angouya
<i>Mus cephalotes</i>	Rat à Grosse Tête

No other new names seem to have been applied to the mice concerned.

6. The names given to Azara's mice are of a great importance since they are the oldest available for a neotropical Cricetidae and in most of the cases are applied to species with a considerable number of subspecies. In the last few years a tendency may be observed to synonymize Azara's mice with younger but far better described nominal species for which types are available. In some cases this merits reserve but in others seems to be correct.

7. Desmarest's names have been accorded the widest recognition. They have been used by every mammalogist and reviser for about 140 years. They are used in classical works like the "Catalogus Mammalium" of Trouessart, have been used in a revision of the taxonomy of Azara's mice by Tate (1932) and they are the names for Azara's Cricetidae mentioned by Sherborn in the "Index Animalium".* Olfers and Fischer's names, on the other hand, have been generally ignored by subsequent authors, probably in the case of G. Fischer because they are not accompanied by a description and because of the rarity of the work in the case of Olfers. For nomenclatorial purposes however both sets of names are available.

8. Hershkovitz (1955) for the first time called attention to the paper by Olfers (1818) and published a full account of these names in 1959. Thus began a long and difficult process of name changing which is still not totally accomplished. For instance in the Checklist of Cabrera (1961), the most important work on South American mammals ever published, three names of Desmarest are still used as well as three names of Olfers.

9. The names dating from G. Fischer 1814 should be used for Azara's cricetids, according to the law of priority, as the oldest synonyms. According to article 23(b) however, Fischer's names for Azara's cricetidae must be considered forgotten names since they have not been used as senior synonyms in the last 50 years. It is interesting to note that many names given by G. Fischer (1814) to other mammals described by Felix de Azara are long since in general use as senior synonyms. Some of them are:

<i>Euryzygomatomys spinosus</i>	Rat Épineux
<i>Dusicyon gymnocercus</i>	Agouarachay
<i>Felis (Herpailurus) yagouaroundi eyra</i>	Yagouaroundi
<i>Mazama gouazoubira gouazoubira</i>	Gouazou-bira

* Sherborn gives without doubt preference to Desmarest's names, he only mentions G. Fischer's names when they are not homonyms of Desmarest's names. All Illiger's names are also mentioned, always remarking that they are *nomina nuda*. Olfers is ignored in the work of Sherborn.

10. Since:

- (a) The names published by Fischer (1814) in "Zoognosia" are the oldest available names for the Cricetidae described in the French edition of the work of Azara (1801);
- (b) The names proposed by Olfers although appropriate according to the Code are 11 years after his rediscovery still not in general use;
- (c) Other Olfers names for mammals described by Azara (1801) are in the same position;
- (d) Many names proposed by G. Fischer (1814) for mammals described by Azara are long since in general use;
- (e) Four of G. Fischer's names are homonyms (and objective synonyms) of Desmarest names, thus facilitating the changing from Desmarest's to Fischer's names. Only two of Olfers' names are homonyms of Desmarest's names;
- (f) *Mus physodes* Brants (an *Oryzomys*) is a junior homonym of *Mus physodes* Olfers (a *Reithrodon*). The name *physodes* has been always employed for Brants' nominal species, the type of which is preserved in the Berlin Museum. For *Mus physodes* Olfers (Rat Oreillard) the name *auritus* is in common use. Confusion between the two names may be avoided by using the older name *auritus* Fischer instead of *physodes* Olfers for the "Rata conejo" of Argentina;
- (g) In adopting G. Fischer names as the appropriate names for Azara's cricetids described in the French edition, I believe it will be possible to remain true to the law of priority and at the same time to reach a real stability in the nomenclature of these mice with the least possible confusion:—

11. I propose that the International Commission place the following names on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology:

- (a) *rufus* Fischer, 1814, p. 71, as published in the binomen *Mus rufus*;
- (b) *tarsonigro* Fischer, 1814, p. 71, as published in the binomen *Mus tarsonigro*;
- (c) *laucha* Fischer, 1814, p. 71, as published in the binomen *Mus laucha*;
- (d) *auritus* Fischer, 1814, p. 71, as published in the binomen *Mus auritus*;
- (e) *angouya* Fischer, 1814, p. 71, as published in the binomen *Mus angouya*;
- (f) *megacephalus* Fischer, 1814, p. 71, as published in the binomen *Mus megacephalus*.

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